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A study was conducted to test the hypothesis that "the number of discipline behaviors by the teacher is a function of the personality of the teacher." "Behavior" was defined as "oral statements" and "discipline" as "the attempt of one to require another to discontinue inappropriate behavior." Trained observers used interaction analysis to record the behaviors of teachers in public school classrooms; behaviors were recorded at three-second intervals. "Discipline" was one of the types of behavior recorded. Three salient variables were posited: the teacher's behavior, the subject matter before the class, and the composition of the student population in the class. Three situations were found where each of these influences could vary while the other two could be controlled. The differences in number of discipline acts by teachers were tested by chi square. Although the number of classroom teachers and classroom situations observed was small, evidence was found that some teachers promote discipline problems through their own behaviors. It was also found that teachers tend to behave consistently: Teachers who employ a high number of acts of discipline with one class tend to do so with another, and teachers who tend to use no or few acts of discipline maintain that behavior when dealing with different classes and:or different subject matter. It is hoped that this pilot study will be replicated with larger numbers of teachers and that other relevant factors will also be researched. (Author/SG)

Discipline Behaviors of Different Teachers

By David Crispin

MUCH HAS been written about discipline from the philosophical and psychological viewpoints; articles and books typically suggest "good" and "bad" methods of discipline in terms of the student's personality development. But here we shall look at discipline in terms of the *personality of the teacher* - how the teacher behaves in the classroom. And rather than attempt to judge the appropriateness of the teacher's method of discipline, we set out in this pilot study to find out if teachers behave significantly differently in terms of the *number of acts of discipline* they employ in the classroom. Such behaviors can be reliably observed, recorded and counted and subjected to statistical analysis.

Hand (1) has suggested that "teachers who are made miserable by discipline problems are the architects of their own misery," and this notion is testable:

Hypothesis: the number of discipline behaviors by the teacher is a function of the personality of the teacher.

Operational definitions:

Behavior = oral statements.

Discipline = the attempt of one to require another to discontinue inappropriate behavior. Examples of discipline behaviors: "Sit down and shut up!" "This is your last warning!" "John, turn around." "Don't, Mary." "Bill, must I remind you—?" "How many times am I going to have to remind this class I expect you to have your books ready on your desks!" "Now, let's get quiet." "John, you know better than to do that." "Don't be rude, Jane—wait your turn." "Cut that out!"

Procedures: Trained observers of demonstrated reliability used interaction analysis (2) to record the live, spontaneous behaviors of teachers in public classrooms. Behavior was recorded every three seconds unless there was a change of behavior within three seconds which was recorded as it occurred. Behavior lasting longer than three seconds was recorded in three-second units. DISCIPLINE is one of the types of behavior recorded.

Assuming that three salient variables influencing students' behaviors (and thus the discipline behaviors of the teacher) are the *teacher's behavior, the subject matter before the class* and the *composition of the student population* in the class, we searched for situations where each of these influences could vary while the other two would be controlled. And we found three such situations in public school classrooms.

In this school the sixth grade was departmentalized; the students remained in the room, in the same seats, and four different teachers came into the room and successively taught their specialties — English, math, science and social science (not in that order). Here the student population was held constant and the teacher and the subject matter varied. And if our hypothesis is valid, we would expect to find a significantly different number of acts of discipline by the teachers. That this is what we found is evidenced by the data in Table I.

When analyzed by the Chi Square method the data in Table I indicate that the differences in the number of discipline acts by the teachers is significant at the .01 level of probability. This suggests that some teachers, at least teacher number four above and perhaps teacher number three, are the architects of the discipline problems originating in their classes. How-

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TABLE I

Discipline Behaviors of Four Different Teachers Who Taught Successively Four Different Subjects to the Same Group of Students

Teacher*	Teacher Behavior		
	Discipline	Non-Discipline**	Total
1	0	635	635
2	0	511	511
3	15	712	727
4	56	491	547
	Total 71	2,349	2,420

*Three of the teachers are female; one is male.
**All the behaviors of the teachers except discipline behaviors.

TABLE II

Discipline Behaviors of Four Different Teachers Who Taught "Like," Homogeneously Grouped, But Different, Classes The Same Subject Matter at the Same Grade Level During the Same Period of the School Day.

Teacher*	Teacher Behavior		
	Discipline	Non-Discipline	Total
1	5	364	369
2	2	457	459
3	3	489	492
4	47	517	564
	Total 57	1827	1884

*All four teachers are male.

ever, the personalities, the teaching methods—of the teachers were not the only independent variable at work in the classroom situation described above. What about the time of day? Perhaps students are fresher, more interested early in the school day; and therefore more discipline problems might be expected to occur later in the day when the students are tired or restless. That this was not the case is attested by the writer. The problem here is to protect the anonymity of the teachers, so suffice it to say that one of the teachers who used no discipline taught "early" in the day and the other teacher who used no discipline taught "late" in the day. What about subject matter? Surely we might assume that some school subjects are better liked by the students than other subjects and that these feelings the student have about the subject matter will affect their behaviors and therefore the behaviors of their teachers. Since this is a testable notion we decided to test it out.

Obviously we could not find a school situation in which the same group of students was taught the same subjects by different teachers. But we did find two school situations, where we could observe teachers and students interacting, which seemed likely to afford us evidence relevant to our question.

In a high school we found that the students had been homogenously grouped. That is, they had been carefully rostered according to their previous achievements in the given subjects. Previous grades and recommendations of previous teachers were considered, and "like" students were grouped together forming three general classifications which we might call "advanced," "average," and "below average." Since the "average" group comprised the bulk of the students, it was with this group that we could observe four different teachers teaching the same subject matter, at the same grade level, at the same period of the school day; and, at least in terms of the previous achievements of the students in that subject matter, the students they taught were "the same."

Did the teachers perform a significantly different number of discipline behaviors? Data pertaining to this question can be found in Table II.

TABLE III

Discipline Behaviors of Two Different Teachers Each of Whom Taught the Same Subject Matter, at the Same Grade Level, at the Same Periods in the School Day, to Two Different Classes of "Like" Homogeneously Grouped Students.

Teacher*	Period	Teacher Behavior		
		Discipline	Non-Discipline	Total
1	1	5	364	369
	2	9	421	430
4	1	47	517	564
	2	39	533	572

*The same Teachers as in Table II above.

TABLE IV

Discipline Behaviors of Three Different Teachers as They Taught Three Different Subjects in Succession to "Self-Contained" Classes of Heterogeneously Grouped Students.

Teacher	Subject	Teacher Behavior		
		Discipline	Non-Discipline	Total
1	Reading	32	497	529
	Math	22	491	513
	Social Studies	10	232	242
	Total	64	1,220	1,284
2	Reading	6	479	485
	Math	9	362	371
	Social Studies	6	291	297
	Total	21	1,132	1,153
3	Reading	2	246	248
	Math	4	314	318
	Social Studies	0	189	189
	Total	6	749	755

The data in Table II indicate that there was a significant difference (P=.01) in the number of acts of discipline of teacher number four as compared with the other three teachers. But was this a function of the behavior of the teacher or was it a function of the group? The thought occurs that by chance teacher number four above was placed in charge of a particularly "difficult" group. To check this possibility we decided to observe the teachers again with different groups of students. Fortunately for our purposes teacher number four taught two classes of "average" students the same subject at the same grade level, as did one of the other three teachers. And the data in Table III were obtained by observing these two teachers a second time as each taught another class.

From the data in Table III we find that when each teacher is compared with himself in two successive classes in which he taught the same subject matter to "like," homogeneously grouped students, there was no significant difference (P=.50 and .30 respectively) in the number of acts of discipline. However, when the two teachers are compared, we find that their numbers of acts of discipline were significantly different at the .01 level of probability.

Would the number of discipline behaviors by the teacher significantly change if the same teacher taught the same group of students three different subjects in succession? To test this question we observed in an elementary school; this time, in the third grade.

The third grade was composed of three teachers and three "self-contained" classes of randomly grouped students. Each teacher was responsible for teaching the various subjects, and we had the opportunity to observe and record in these classrooms during three successive periods of instruction. All three observations were made during the same periods, on different days; and during the observations all three teachers taught the same subjects—read-

ing, math, and social studies— in succession.

Was there a significantly different number of discipline behaviors by the teachers? Did the number of discipline behaviors by a teacher significantly change as he taught three different subjects in succession? Data pertaining to these questions can be found in Table IV.

The data reveal that the teachers' numbers of acts of discipline did not significantly change as the subject matter changed; the levels of probability are .30, .50 and .30 respectively. Yet when compared with each other they were different at the .10 level of probability.

Conclusions: This pilot study was conducted to gather evidence relevant to the question: "Do teachers cause their own discipline problems in the classroom? And although the number of teachers and classroom situations observed was small, evidence was found that some teachers are, in Hand's words, "the architects of their own misery." Where the students, and the classroom itself, were held constant, different teachers employed a significantly different number of acts of discipline. Where the students were "alike" (but not the same people) and the time of day *and the subject matter* were held constant, different teachers used significantly different numbers of discipline behaviors. And where the teacher and the students were held constant, no significant differences were found in the number of acts of discipline as the teachers dealt with three different kinds of subject matter. And finally, our observations reveal that teachers tend to behave consistently; i.e., teachers who employ a high number of acts of discipline with one class do so with another—and also as they deal with different subject matter. And teachers who use no, or few, acts of discipline maintain that behavior with different classes and/or when dealing with different subject matter.

The data collected indicate that *the discipline behavior of a teacher is a* function *of* himself—*his own personality.* And yet surely many other factors are relevant here, and these offer implications for further research:

1. Do community environments, socio-economic backgrounds of students influence school discipline problems? One could use a system of interaction analysis to compare all the teachers and students in one school with all the teachers and students in another school in a different community.
2. Do the grade level or age of the students make a difference? Interaction analysis could be used to compare the number of acts of discipline occurring in all the twelfth grade classrooms with all the seventh grade classrooms and first grade classrooms in the same school system, etc.
3. Do the age, background or professional preparation of the teacher make a difference?
4. Does training in interaction analysis change a teacher regarding his discipline behaviors?
5. And finally, teachers' behavior should be observed and recorded in a situation where the teacher and the subject matter remain the same and the class population varies greatly; i.e. homogeneously grouped "high achievers" vs homogeneously grouped "low achievers."

Hopefully this pilot study will be replicated with a large number of teachers.

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